

PROVIDENCE WATER SUPPLY BOARD
RIPUC DOCKET NO. 5022
**PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION'S DATA REQUESTS ON THE QUANTIFICATION
OF WAIVED FEES
SPRING 2021 UPDATE
(Issued April 15, 2021)**

1. Does Providence Water typically charge late fees to customers? If so, please provide the tariff reference and the types of customers to whom the late fee applies.

RESPONSE: Providence Water does not charge late fees to our customers.

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2. Does Providence Water typically charge interest on overdue balances to customers? If so, please provide the tariff reference and the types of customers to whom the interest charge applies.

RESPONSE: Yes, Providence Water does charge interest on overdue balances. The tariff reference "*Interest at a rate of 1% per month will be charged on unpaid account balances over 30 days from the due date*" applies to retail, wholesale, and hydrant customers and is identified on Tariffs A through F.

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3. Does Providence Water typically pass through to the user the so called “convenience fees” associated with paying with credit cards or debit cards?

RESPONSE: Yes, the “convenience fees” associated with paying with credit cards and debit cards are paid by the user.

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4. Does Providence Water typically pass through to the user the so called “convenience fees” associated with paying with an ACH/electronic check?

RESPONSE: Yes, the “convenience fees” associated with paying with an ACH/electronic check are paid by the user.

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5. Does Providence Water intend to seek recovery of the costs associated with the absorption of the applicable fees?

RESPONSE: At this time, Providence Water does not intend to seek recovery of the costs associated with the absorption of the applicable fees, but Providence Water may seek recovery in the future.

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6. Please indicate the date upon which Providence Water ceased charging customers for late fees, interest fees, credit card/debit card payment fees, or ACH/check fees (please list each separately, even if the date is the same).

RESPONSE: Providence Water ceased charging customers: the fees mentioned above as follows:

- Late Fees – not applicable
- Interest fees - June 1, 2020
- Credit card/debit card payment fees - June 1, 2020
- ACH/check fees - June 1, 2020

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7. Utilities only collect late fees and interest fees on accounts for which payments are made. Similarly, credit card/debit card fees and ACH/electronic check fees are only absorbed by the utility under the PUC's order if payments are made. For the period commencing on the date provided in response to number 6 through, April 30, 2021, please provide the following:
- a. The total number of accounts on which payments were made.
 - b. The number of accounts where payments were made and interest and/or late fees were waived.
 - c. The number of accounts where payments were made by credit card/debit card.
 - d. The number of accounts where payments were made by ACH/electronic check.
 - e. The dollar amount of credit card/debit card fees absorbed by the utility that would have otherwise been assessed to the customer paying with a credit card/debit card.
 - f. The dollar amount of ACH/electronic check absorbed by the utility that would have otherwise been assessed to the customer paying through ACH/electronic check.
 - g. The dollar amount of waived late fees on accounts where payments were made.
 - h. The dollar amount of waived interest fees on accounts where payments were made. If the response is that the dollar amount cannot be determined but the utility will seek cost recovery, please explain how the utility would quantify the amount to be recovered and meet a reasonable burden of proof.

RESPONSE:

- a. Providence Water processed **1,078,659** payments against **662,782** accounts during the period from June 1, 2020, through April 30, 2021.

June '20 - 56,168 accounts
July '20 - 54,293 accounts
August '20 - 56,307 accounts
September '20 - 57,344 accounts
October '20 - 60,719 accounts
November '20 - 56,151 accounts
December '20 - 60,438 accounts
January '21 - 68,637 accounts
February '21 - 57,495 accounts
March '21 - 72,892 accounts
April '21 - 62,338 accounts

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- b. Providence Water processed **257,399** accounts where payments were made during the period from June 1, 2020, through April 30, 2021 where interest was waived.

June '20 – 24,200 accounts
July '20 – 25,031 accounts
August '20 - 23,093 accounts
September '20 – 23,575 accounts
October '20 – 22,392 accounts
November '20 – 23,042 accounts
December '20 – 24,110 accounts
January '21 – 24,980 accounts
February '21 – 21,266 accounts
March '21 – 23,137 accounts
April '21 – 22,573 accounts

- c. Providence Water processed **59,988** credit card payments from June 1, 2020, through April 30, 2021.
- d. Providence Water processed **144,309** ACH/electronic check payments from June 1, 2020, through April 30, 2021.
- e. Providence Water absorbed **\$263,549.00** in credit/debit card fees, which otherwise would have been charged to our customers from June 1, 2020, through April 30, 2021.
- f. Providence Water absorbed **\$63,407.80** in ACH/electronic check fees, which otherwise would have been charged to our customers from June 1, 2020, through April 30, 2021.
- g. Not Applicable
- h. Providence Water waived **\$477,220.57** in interest fees, from June 1, 2020 to April 30, 2021.

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8. Please indicate the first date Providence Water sent termination notices to customers with dates not affected by a Commission decision (in other words, the utility could follow through with a physical termination on or after the notice period if payment or a payment arrangement was not made). Please break out by customer class if applicable.

RESPONSE: As reported in September 2020, Providence Water sent out the following **969** non-payment termination notices, in various customer classes, from September 1, 2020 to October 9, 2020.

September 1, 2020 - October 9, 2020 Code: Dwelling Class Account Count 1 - Single Family 295 2 - 2 - 5 Family 446 3 - Apartments 27 4 - Combination 35 5 - Commercial I 61 6 - Commercial II 62 7 - Industrial 4 23 - Residential Condo 7 33 - Farm / Forest 1 71 - Charitable 1 72 - Church 1 75 - Hospital 1 78 - Municipal 14 79 - School 5 80 - State 5 82 - City Vote 1 PARK - PARK 3 Total: 969

From October 10, 2020 to April 30, 2021, Providence Water sent out **5626** non-payment termination notices in the same above customer classes. These notices were created using the identical collection report for our non-payment termination notice criteria (**any past due balance over \$499.99 and no payment in the last 60+ days**) as was used for our September '20 reporting.

With utilities still not allowed to terminate non-payment accounts, Providence Water shifted our termination efforts and daily collection activities to customer bad checks and customer broken signed agreements, which we could terminate following the RIPUC guidelines.

Providence Water staff continues making reminder calls to customers who have outstanding invoices or are behind on their signed monthly payment agreements.